

Saudi Arabia might be destabilized. A multi-year, multi-decade or multi-century conflict could ensue.

Should Saddam's hold on power or his personal security be in imminent jeopardy, it would appear probable that he may utilize the techniques of terrorism—possibly including weapons of mass destruction—to defend his regime and wreak revenge on his enemies.

In addition, it is also conceivable that new dangers would emerge with a feeble or hostile successor regime. Chaos, bloodshed and revenge might follow. Weapons of mass destruction might fall into a greater number of hands. An unstable Iraq could be a haven for terrorists and a continuing threat to regional peace.

Indeed, it is impressive how little, not how much we know, especially attitudinally in Iraq and the Muslim world about the potential of American intervention in Iraq. To what extent will support be manifested for Saddam? Will there be disorder, chaos, bloodshed and revenge? Will the Shia turn on the Sunni minority. Will the Kurds seek an independent state?

Moreover, it is important to ponder whether an invasion of Iraq would worsen rather than reduce the threat of terrorists gaining control of weapons of mass destruction. Saddam could decide to disperse his weapons stockpiles, and the scientists who build them, into the hands of global terrorists. Even if he did not order such, in the chaos of war it is conceivable that individual Iraqi commanders and scientists might make their own profit-oriented accommodation with terrorists.

More broadly, it is by no means clear that regime change in Iraq, even if successfully carried out, will significantly diminish the threat from Islamic extremists who share little in common with Saddam Hussein.

Hence the need for the United States to pursue a vigorous two-pronged approach in the Middle East: intensified efforts to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and greater focus on economic development and democratization in the region.

The importance of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian standoff cannot be underestimated. We know from attitudinal surveys that Muslims generally like Americans and admire American culture. Many have chosen to immigrate to the United States. They do not, however, trust our government. To win the war on terrorism we will have to convince Muslims throughout the world that we are, in fact, favor justice and the creation of just societies everywhere.

All Americans understand we share a common concern for the fate of the Israeli people and the viability of the Israeli state. The commitment of the United States to Israel must be bedrock. We must support Israel and help bring peace and stability to the region. There must be continuity of commitment, but there must also be recognition of opportunities to lead. Unfortunately, critical opportunities have been lost in partial measure because Presidents were imperfectly skilled and in some cases wanted to operate in relationship to timing they hoped to control rather than in relationship to circumstances and events in the region.

For example, optimism surrounded the Oslo accord precipitated by President Bush's father. Yet the United States lagged in efforts to push immediately thereafter the logical steps that should have been taken to create a long-term framework for peace. To his credit, President

Clinton pressed at the end of his administration for a breakthrough agreement. At Camp David, Arafat turned his back on the most forthcoming peace proposal Israel has ever formally made. The tragedy of Arafat was not that he had to accept every parameter of the proposal put forward by Prime Minister Barak, but that he failed to make a counteroffer, thereby destroying prospects for peace, implicitly thumbing his nose at Israel and the prestige of the American presidency.

Following the breakdown of the Camp David talks in July 2000, and the subsequent outbreak of violence on September 28, the sides nevertheless agreed to continue negotiations at lower levels during December and January 2001 at the Egyptian town of Taba. As President Clinton left office, Barak's government had but a few weeks of life left before the election that brought Ariel Sharon to power. The outbreak of the violence had made it unlikely that Israelis would approve any proposal of concessions to the Palestinians in a referendum. Nonetheless, both sides hammered out proposals that came much closer to each other's positions than before.

No official summaries of the proposals were issued, but subsequent leaks provided some details. The Palestinians, according to Israeli sources, agreed to a map that would allow Israel to keep most of its settlements and about 4 percent of the territory.

But given the short time left to the Barak government, the preoccupation with the transition in Washington, and the continuing violence, the proposals came to nothing. Both sides had agreed that the proposals would be binding only if they resulted in an agreement. The joint communique noted, however, that foundations had been laid for future discussions.

The new administration held that President Clinton had attempted to negotiate on his time frame and increased tension by seeking a resolution that was not ripe. My sense is that the Bush team was half right. President Clinton had pressed on his time frame but erred by being tardy instead of premature. If pressed two or three years earlier by the Clinton Administration, the Barak approach would have been more sympathetically received. And if the Taba framework had been immediately pressed on the parties by the new Bush foreign policy team which was initially so well received in the Arab world, quite possibly a breakthrough agreement could have been made.

Two opportunities for resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian issue, one in this and the other in the prior Administration, were not grasped and this circumstance hangs like dangling fruit to terrorists the world over.

The major US foreign policy concern in the region must be resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian issue. All administrations at all times must dedicate themselves to this challenge. In this context, the need to achieve peace between Israel and the Palestinians is of far greater significance than waging war with Iraq. Whether we like it or not, whether it is fair or rational or not, we are simply in a far better position to deal in whatever way we choose with Iraq after an Israeli-Palestinian settlement. It is a far less favorable circumstance if we attempt to deal with Iraq beforehand.

Some contend that Israel is in a far stronger strategic position if the United States quickly and successfully disarms Iraq. This may be

the case. But no country carries greater risks during the conflict and in its aftermath than Israel if intervention proves messy, if Iraq is able to unleash an attack on Israel.

In the Middle East, there are two sets of value scales. From a Western perspective, the case for creating and protecting the state of Israel because of the history of pogroms and the Holocaust is compelling. From a Muslim perspective, an argument can be made that Arab peoples have a historical claim to parts of the Holy Land and its holy places and no responsibility for the Holocaust. The challenge is to take these juxtaposed value systems and reach a reconciliation both sides can respect and live with on a long-term basis. My sense is that somewhere around the points laid on the table at Camp David and Taba there is a basis for a credible resolution, but it is very doubtful given the current state of enmity and distrust between the parties that slow-paced, partial steps can lead incrementally to a larger vision of peace and accommodation.

Nation-building was used pejoratively during the last campaign, but America has no choice but to do more ourselves and to press our allies much more forthrightly for assistance to Afghanistan, a country in which we effected a constructive change of government. For all the unfortunate consequences that can sometimes befall policy, we are most fortunate to have a leader in charge that the world can respect. This circumstance, however, may change quickly based on reaction to actions inside and outside of Afghanistan. A U.S. war with a Muslim country will have wide consequences elsewhere, some good, some bad, most unpredictable.

Here it should be noted that there has been relatively little discussion about the commitments, likely to be of a long-term character, that Washington must undertake after a military campaign against Iraq. The term "regime change" does not adequately describe the full scope of what we expect to achieve as a result of a military campaign in Iraq. We would be expected to work with Iraqis, including those outside Iraq, to both develop a new constitutional structure as well as find credible post-Saddam leadership—leadership that hopefully would share our objectives with respect to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, development of democratic institutions, etc. We will almost certainly need substantial forces on the ground in order to prevent bloodletting, secure important economic and military assets, and prevent possible Iranian meddling. And although Iraq has substantial oil reserves and therefore a better resource base than Afghanistan from which to assist in financing reconstruction, the costs of humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation could nevertheless be in the billions of dollars.

We lack firm estimates of the domestic cost to the U.S. of a potential conflict. Seat of the pants White House estimates range from \$100 billion to \$200 billion, with the price of oil estimated to rise to perhaps \$30 a barrel for some unknown period of time. More recently, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that fighting a war with Iraq could cost the U.S. between \$6 and \$9 billion a month, with preparing for a conflict and terminating it later adding other \$14 billion to \$20 billion to the total.

The 1991 Persian Gulf War cost \$60 billion in 1991 dollars, with the brunt picked up by